

MIKVAH GIRLS is a live performance examining the sexual, cultural and ideological struggles of a group of Yeshiva girls coming of age in the nineties. In *Mikvah Girls*, a series of movements, monologues and musical suites meditate upon the codes of female Jewish ritual dress, prayer and sexuality. Choreographed movement and collaged live analog/electronic sounds will be incorporated to evoke the clash between the closed environment of a teenage girl's Orthodox Jewish day school and the subcultural worlds of DIY squatter culture and feminist activism that hover beyond its walls.

A Performance By: Marianna Ellenberg

Choreography: Stacy Grossfield

Music: Brian Chase

Performers: Alex Tartarsky, Maxwell Cosmo Cramer, Hannah Applebaum, Ema Zivkovic, Ella Dawn W-S, Georgia Kate Cohen



Cultural Influences: Orthodox Jewish Halachic Ritual, Abjection & Riot Grrrl Memoirs

Orthodox Jewish rituals monitoring sexuality, dating and the menstrual cycle will be the source of the three dance movements structuring Mikva Girls. The chanting and musical suites will oscillate between traditional liturgical chants, Riot Grrrl protests, teenage cheers and feminist creeds. The mashup of secular, erotic and liturgical within the short comedic skits and cut-up chants is at the heart of this work. The girls struggle to find their own identities within the conflicting forces of their Yeshiva's religious dogma and Nineties era youth subcultures that they are submerged within. They rebel against seemingly archaic religious rituals which also regulates their bodily image, movement and being. These dances demonstrate the fragility of religious codes in opposition to the power of female sexuality and will at the threshold of coming into consciousness.

NARRATIVE

The performances consists of a loose narrative following the young women's coming of age stories, including navigating their religious high school's culutral codes while discovering the blossoming Riot Grrrl! movement and the acitivist DIY scene on the Lower East Side.

The narrative begins at the Rehovot School, where a clique of friends, Malkha and Minna, navigate the trials of being a teenager and the hypocrisy of religious virtuosity all within a school day. Jewish female iconoclasts Simone Weil and Andrea Dworkin have informed my rendering of the various personalities inhabiting the world of Rehovot school. Beyond the confines of a synagogue, temple or a church; an ecstatic cry emerges through the bodies, voices and markings of the piece.

In Mikva Girls — A Ritual Movement Exercise, I will work in collaboration with choreographer Stacey Greenfield to create a series of 4 ritual dances and chants that reframe women's purity and cleansing rituals within Jewish culture, a nineties coming of age framework and absurdist, neo-dadaist theater. Artist Sophie Stone will create a series of tapestries that will function as the set. Composer Brian Chase will make tones and a soundscape to accompany the movement. The work draws both from Dadaist strain, fluxus and structural dance techniques.

